



POLICY

TITLE:	Counting Zebrafish
Policy Number:	2014-019
Responsible Department:	Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
Policy Contact:	IACUCOffice@westernu.edu
Approval Date:	8/13/14
Reviewed:	7/12/17 (No changes); 3/11/2020
Revised:	3/11/2020 (Added PI must describe in protocol procedure for estimating #s)

Purpose of Policy: To ensure compliance with all applicable regulations regarding the numbers of zebrafish used for teaching and research.

Policy Information: According to [Section A4 of the Office of Laboratory Animal Welfare's \(OLAW\) FAQs](#), OLAW interprets Public Health Service Policy as applying to egg-laying vertebrate species only after hatching. In FAQ Section A5, OLAW adds that "...larval forms of fish and amphibians have vertebrae and are covered by PHS Policy." Zebrafish larvae usually hatch 3 days post-fertilization (dpf).

In light of the above, larval zebrafish older than 3 dpf and adult zebrafish must both be accounted for in animal use protocol applications. However, the IACUC recognizes that obtaining an exact count of the numbers of larval and adult zebrafish is difficult and, therefore, the IACUC will rely on experienced investigators to arrive at a reasonable estimate of the numbers of fish 4 dpf and older that either have been or will be used. The investigator must, however, describe in the protocol the procedure used to estimate the number of fish.